

Alpine National Park



The High Country - walks around Feathertop, Hotham and Dinner Plain

There is a wide variety of walks in the Alpine National Park and the adjacent Mt Hotham Alpine Resort. The day and overnight walks described in this leaflet are just a selection from many possibilities. The walking season lasts from early November to late May as the area is usually snow covered during the winter and early spring.

How far, how fast

In good weather, a fit person can cover 3 - 4 kilometres an hour. Remember to make allowances for long steep climbs, photography and rests. Let someone know before you go.

Mount Loch area

Several walks start at the Loch Carpark, 1 km west (Harrietteville side) of Mt Hotham Village.

Australian Alps Walking Track (650 km)

The Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) passes through the area on its mountainous 650 km (10 week) journey through the Australian Alps from Walhalla (Gippsland, Victoria) to Tharwa (near Canberra, ACT).

Between Loch Carpark (Mt Hotham) and Mt Bogong there is a numbered snow pole line spaced 40 metres apart adjacent to the AAWT. Pole 1 is at the Loch Carpark and Pole 1285 at Mt Bogong. Many people undertake this beautiful high country section of the AAWT as a 60 km, 5 day (4 night) hike.

Walkers must be self sufficient with food, water, first aid and camping gear, and be skilled in the use of maps and compass.

1. Mount Loch (8 km return)

Mt Loch (1887 metres) affords impressive views of the High Plains, Mt Hotham and the rugged east face of Mt Feathertop. It can be reached by following the AAWT for 3.5 km to pole 60. Leave the pole line here, follow a vehicle track north past the rocky basalt columns for 0.5 km. Climb to the summit along a track on the north western side of Mt Loch. Return by the same route.

2. Derrick Hut (9 km return)

Charlie Derrick was a cross country skier who died in a blizzard while attempting to ski from Mt Bogong to Mt Hotham.

Derrick Hut was built as a day shelter for cross country skiers and is not for overnight accommodation. Follow the AAWT pole line from the Loch Carpark to pole 94 and on to Derrick Hut.

3. Spargo Hut (11 km return)

Spargo Hut belonged to Bill Spargo, a well known local identity who discovered and opened the Red Robin Mine and ran the first Hotham Heights guest house.

Follow the AAWT pole line to pole 84 and then an unmarked walking track downhill and to the south for 1 km to the hut. Return by the same route.

4. Dibbins Hut (18 km return)

As the original Dibbins Hut, built in 1920, was beyond repair, a new hut was built on the same site in 1987 using similar log construction and design. Standing on a snow plain beside the Cobungra River it makes a pleasant destination for a day walk or an overnight hike. Follow the pole line past Derrick Hut and down Swindlers Spur to the hut near pole 187.

5. Dibbins - Mount Loch Circuit (19 km return)

Dibbins Hut can be included in a longer day or overnight walk. Follow the pole line past Dibbins Hut to Cobungra Gap, 0.5 km further on. Leave the pole line here and follow the track for 2 km to a junction where the Red Robin battery is located. Turn left along the four wheel drive track. This climbs Machinery Spur, past the Red Robin Adit, towards the summit of Mt Loch.

Climb Mt Loch and return to the vehicle track. Continue for 0.5 km to rejoin the pole line and follow it back to the Loch Carpark. For an overnight walk, the best campsite is on the Cobungra River near Dibbins Hut.



Dinner Plain area

6. Hotham - Dinner Plain 'Ski' Trail (13 km one way)

Outside the snow season this cross country ski trail makes a pleasant walk or cycling track, meandering through Snow Gum woodland and open snow plains. Starting at the Hotham General Store and finishing at Dinner Plain Village the trail is never far from the Great Alpine Road.

Paw Paw Plain (2 km return)

Paw Paw Plain is only a short distance from the Great Alpine Road and affords fine views of the remote Dargo River Valley and Mt Tabletop. The track leaves the Great Alpine Road 100 metres on the Omeo side of Mother Johnson Entrance Station. It climbs steeply at first, then follows a ridge to the plain. Return by the same route.

7. Brandy Creek Mine to Cobungra River (8 km return)

This disused vehicle track leaves the Great Alpine Road 6 km towards Omeo from Hotham Village. After a 1 km well defined track, the extensive works of what was once the Brandy Creek Gold Mine can be seen on the right. Continue down the track to the delightful flats of the Cobungra River. Allow some time to explore the river and return by the same route.

8. Mount Tabletop (10 km return)

Mt Tabletop is a distinctive flat plateau linked to the Great Dividing Range by a low ridge. In this untracked area at the headwaters of the Dargo River there is a distinct feeling of isolation. From JB Plain, 9 km towards Omeo from Hotham Village, walk south (following an old fence line) across the plains for 0.5 km. From here the route is marked by orange triangular markers. After crossing snow plains and Snow Gum woodland the route drops down to Tabletop Creek and then follows a long ridge up to the plateau. The track is marked to a rocky outcrop just below the summit. Return by the same route.

9. Carmichael Falls (2 km return)

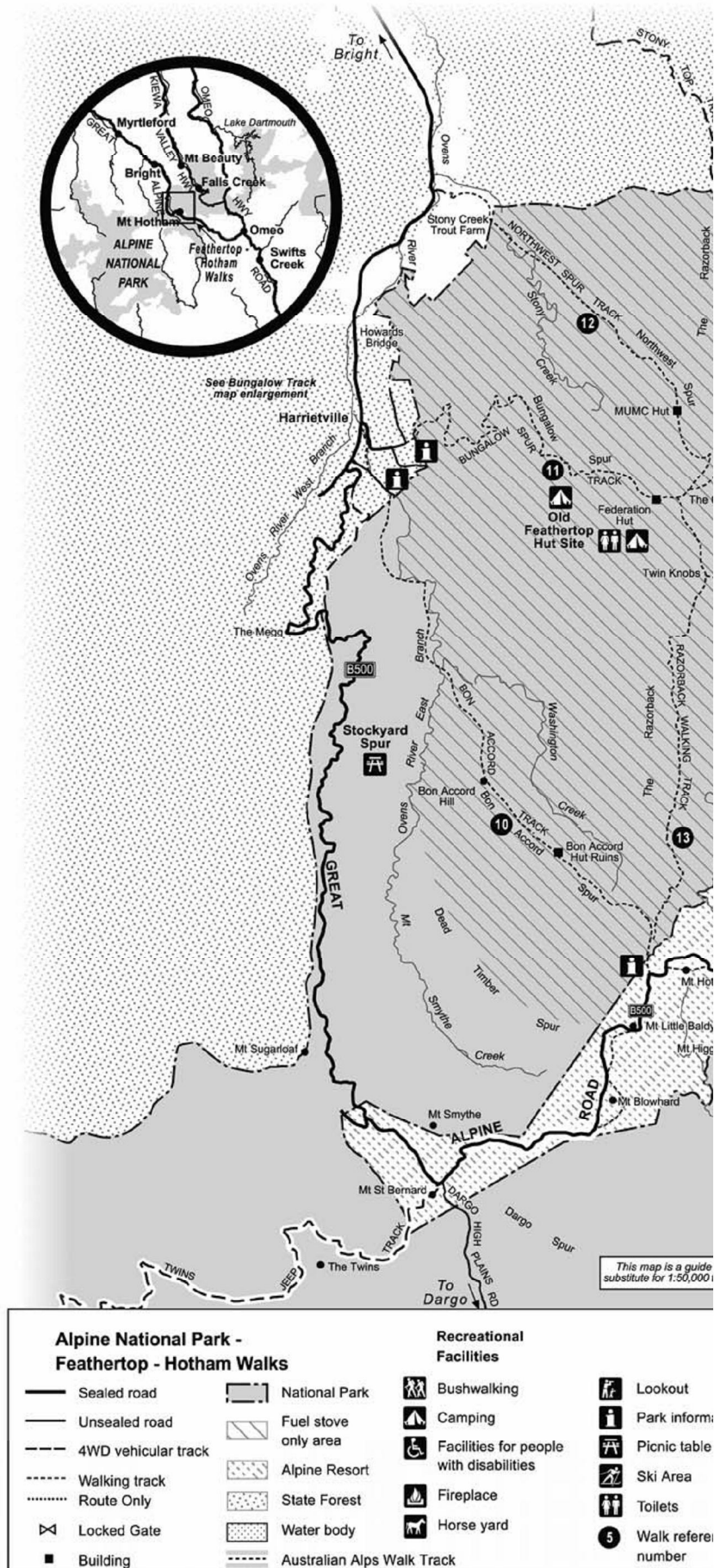
The walk starts at the sign post on the Dinner Plain Track (4WD) directly south of the Dinner Plain Village. The track leads to a lookout over picturesque falls among the Snow Gums. Do not leave the track or approach the cliff edge.

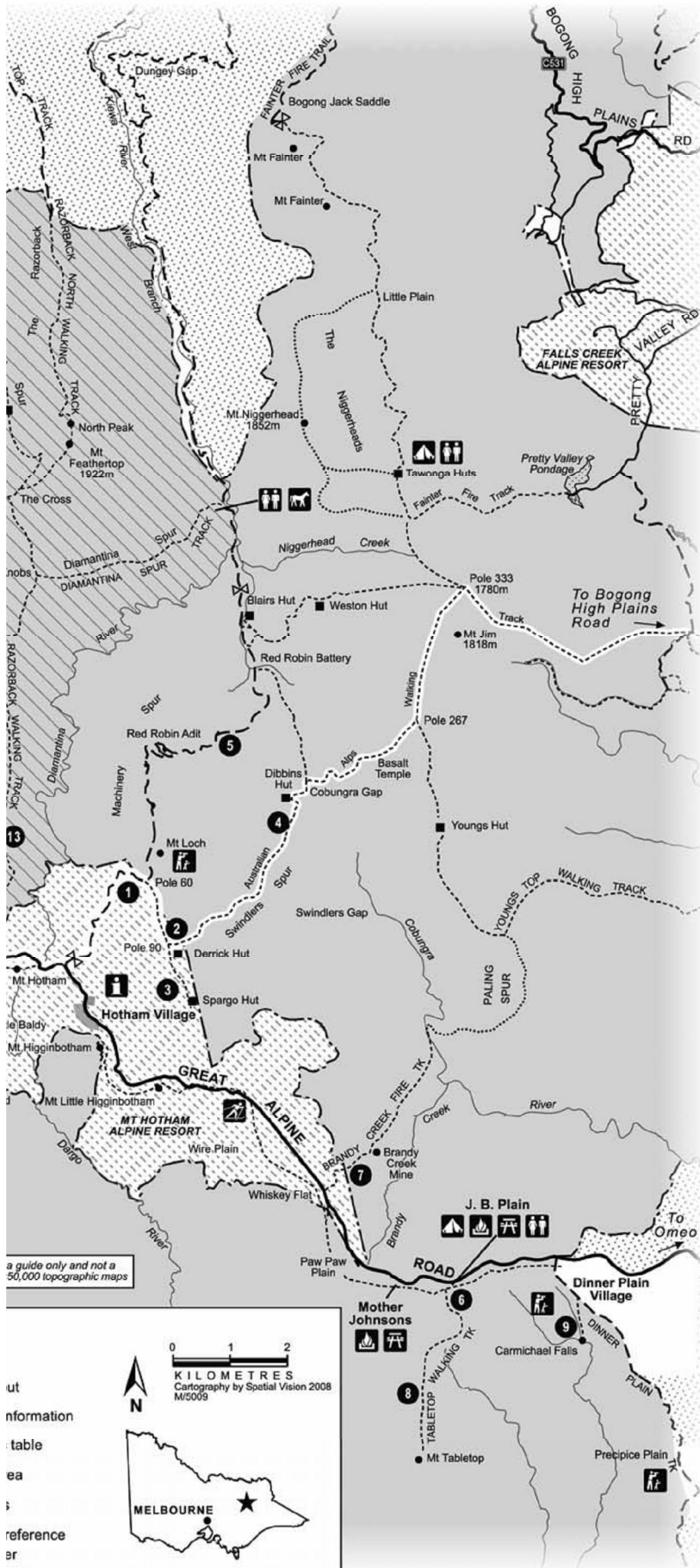
Precipice Plain (9 km return)

Walk along the Dinner Plain Track to a lovely natural lookout across the remote Dargo Valley.

Mount Feathertop area

Mt Feathertop (1922 metres) rises sharply on all sides to a spectacular alpine peak. Carved into the steep eastern face, Avalanche and Hell Fire gullies graphically describe its ruggedness. The mountain should be treated with respect and walkers should be fit and prepared for the sudden onset of bad weather. In winter, only experienced parties should attempt to ski in the area. There are three access tracks to the summit, the Bungalow Spur, North West Spur and the Razorback.





10. Bon Accord Spur (24 km return)

The Bon Accord Spur was the route taken by walkers, horseriders and pack horses to Mt Hotham before the Great Alpine Road was built. Today it provides a pleasant walk to Mt Hotham, or it can be part of a route taking in the Razorback and Bungalow Spur. For this, an overnight camp would be necessary. Take the first left after the Snowline Hotel in Harrietville (towards Hotham). Drive along the road for 1 km to the signposted start of the walk. Follow the Ovens River - East Branch for 5 km. The steep climb up the spur starts from the bridge at Washington Creek. The Bon Accord Hut ruin is 9.5 km from the start of the track. From here it is 2 km up to the Razorback, then 0.5 km to the Great Alpine Road.

11. Bungalow Spur (22 km return)

The Bungalow Spur Track is the most popular approach to Mt Feathertop. It is well graded and sheltered for most of its length. To reach the start of the track, turn left off the Great Alpine Road at Harrietville, just before the school bridge over the Ovens River. Follow the road for 0.5 km to the parking area and notice board.

12. North West Spur (18 km return)

This is a less frequently used route to Mt Feathertop. It is rough and very steep in places. Leave the Great Alpine Road at the Stony Creek Trout Farm, 6 km south of Harrietville. Cross the bridge and park your vehicle. Walk up the track beside Stony Creek avoiding private property by staying close to the creek. Within 0.5 km you come to sign marking the boundary of the Alpine National Park. The track crosses the creek twice before climbing steeply to the spur. The domed MUMC Hut is 7 km from the start of the walk. From here it is 2 km to the summit along a flat ridge and up a steep climb. Return via Bungalow Spur to Harrietville or retrace your steps.

13. The Razorback (22 km)

The Razorback Walking Track begins at Diamantina Hut, 2.5 km on the Harrietville side of the Hotham Village. It crosses the high ridge linking Mt Hotham and Mt Feathertop. The route is generally above the tree line so you will enjoy excellent views most of the way. The ridge is very exposed and should be not be crossed in unsettled or bad weather. The junction with the Bungalow Spur Track is 1.5 km from the summit at a site called The Cross. The final climb to the top is steep but well worth the effort. Return by the same route or, if you have made suitable transport arrangements, walk down to Harrietville via the Bungalow Spur Track.

Fire in the Alps

During the summer of 2003 and 2006 a number of fires swept through the Australian Alps. As a result some roads and tracks have been closed in the interest of public safety. Burnt visitor facilities and directional signs will be replaced in time. Over time the natural environment will recover although some alpine (ie mossbed and wetland) and subalpine (Snow Gum and Alpine Ash) communities will take longer to regenerate. To assist regeneration, please keep to tracks and trails, especially in fire affected areas.

For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre

Call 13 1963

or visit our website at

www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

All native plants, animals, archaeological and historic sites are protected by law

Take your rubbish home, most rubbish will not burn or rot

Dogs and other pets are not permitted

Firearms are only permitted in the park in accordance with Hunting Regulations

Choose a firm, dry, well drained camp site at least 20 metres from any watercourse

Keep to designated tracks

Use a portable stove instead of lighting a fire - especially above or near the tree line

Always check fire danger forecasts. No fires (including stoves) on days of Total Fire Ban. This park is in the North-East Fire Ban District

Fuel Stove Only Area. Due to vegetation damage and visual scarring no campfires are to be lit on Mt Bogong or its approaches

Where toilets are not provided, bury your waste at least 100 m from water or camp sites

Water - be self-sufficient and treatment of any water collected is recommended

Wash up away from streams to protect the fragile stream environment

Enjoy a visit to a hut, but do not use them for accommodation, always carry a tent

Please don't throw this park note away. Keep it, return it for others to use, or recycle it

Bungalow Spur track notes

These are approximate distances only.

0 - 1.5 km (Creek crossing)

After 300 meters the track crosses the creek and continues on the northern side of the gully until it re-crosses the creek. At this point the creek runs underground.

1.5 - 2.0 km (Picture Point)

Picture Point is an area once cleared of trees to provide a clear view of the panorama beyond Harrietville and the Upper Ovens Valley for people on their way to Bungalow Hut in the 1920s.

2.0 - 4.0 km (Tobias Gap)

On approaching this point, named after the postmaster at Harrietville (1901 - 1913) who was also a renowned photographer, a distinct vegetation change can be seen. On the southern side of the spur, notice the tall straight trees with fibrous bark half way up the trunk. They are Alpine Ash which like cool, moist conditions. In this cold shaded gully, the Alpine Ash occurs lower than usual. Peppermint Gum forest is seen on the drier northern side of the spur.

4.0 - 7.0 km (Spring)

In this section, the half way point to the summit is reached. The track is now well into thick Alpine Ash forest. At this altitude, other eucalypts cannot compete. Alpine Ash requires fire to regenerate, and cold conditions to break seed dormancy. The trees here are evenly aged as they germinated together after a bush fire.

7.0 - 7.5 km (Bungalow Hut site)

Snow Gums are the only eucalypts that can grow at this altitude. Conditions are harsh, with snow cover for 3 - 4 months of the year. Little is left to see at the Bungalow Hut site. Originally built in 1924 for skiers, the hut had 30 beds. The only access was by horse on the track you are following. There was a ski run beside the site. The hut was one of several huts and chalets managed by the Victorian Railways in the 1920s as tourist destinations, but as there was no vehicle access, Feathertop became less popular. Bungalow Hut was destroyed by fire in 1939 and never rebuilt.

7.5 - 7.8 km (Old Feathertop Hut site)

In 1906, a temporary shelter was erected here by the Harrietville Progress Association, but replaced by a more permanent structure in 1912. This hut escaped the 1939 fires but deteriorated quickly. A good spring can be found 100 meters down the track to the right.

7.8 - 9.0 km (Federation Hut)

The track climbs to the Federation Hut. This hut was destroyed during the 2003 bushfires, but was rebuilt in 2004. This is a good area to rest before the final ascent.

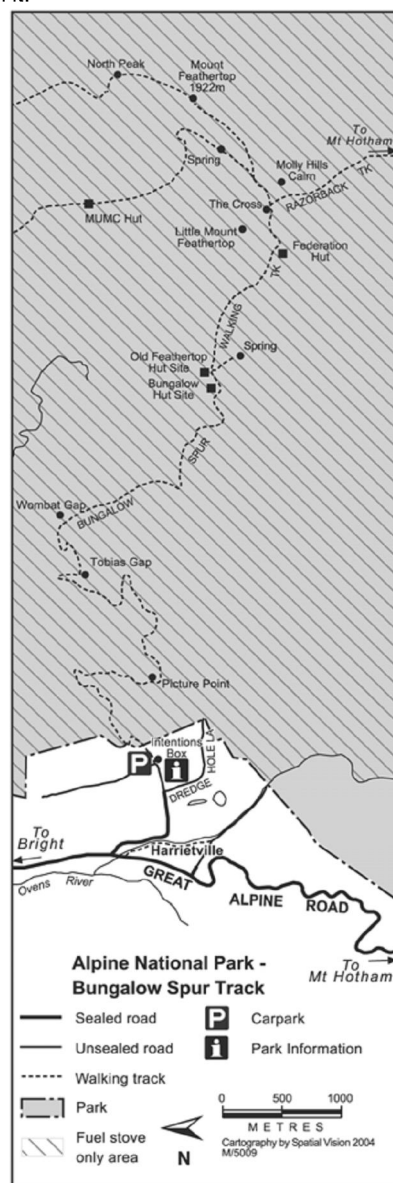
The area beyond the hut is very exposed. If weather conditions are poor, consider turning back now.

9.0 - 9.5 km (The Razorback)

On the right, the track from just below Mt Hotham along the Razorback meets the Bungalow Spur Track. In this area only shrubs and grasses grow, along with the hardy Snow Gum.

9.5 - 11.0 km (Summit)

It is now a steep climb to the exposed summit of Mt Feathertop, but the 360 degree views are worth it!



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